

OSNR WORKING GROUP MEETING #3

Two OSNR tiers have been established:

1. Core Landscapes: high value resource areas, most of which are protected or regulated by existing federal, state or county regulations, ownership, or other status. Also includes the following unprotected resources:
 - A. High Priority Woodlands
 - B. Remaining Woodlands
 - C. Waterbody and Stream Buffers in Undeveloped Areas
 - D. Core Prairies and Grasslands
2. Opportunity Landscapes: important resource areas or opportunities for creating new open spaces, connections, restoration, mitigation, food production, and stewardship activities.

This memo provides additional information on where the four unprotected Core Landscapes (1A – 1D above) are located, how many acres they cover, and potential preservation strategies.

A. **High Priority Woodlands** include high value woodlands that include rare resources or provide habitat for threatened and endangered species. This includes oak woodlands, which were once a common ecosystem type in the Midwest but are highly endangered today. Intact oak woodlands are now one of the rarest plant communities on earth. Fortunately, many degraded oak woodlands within the Corridor still remain and can be restored.

- High Priority Woodlands cover 6,101 acres of the entire Corridor.
- 3,499 acres of High Priority Woodlands are located in protected landscapes.
- 2,602 acres of High Priority Woodlands are unprotected.

Preservation strategies could include:

1. Adoption of a model Woodland Preservation Ordinance, or modification of existing Tree Preservation Ordinances, to include elements related to protecting the structure and function of oak woodland ecosystems rather than the individual tree-based approach taken by most municipal tree preservation ordinances. Such an ordinance would include factors such as area disturbed, vegetation and animal species, and size and age of native trees. CMAP and the consultant team may be able to provide a model ordinance and/or examples of effective Woodland Preservation Ordinance as part of next steps.
 - Standard may include replacement ratios based on the area removed or disturbed, for example¹:

▪ 0% to 20% area removal	1:1 replacement ratio
▪ 20% to 30% area removal	1.5:1 replacement ratio
▪ Clearing violation (over 30% removal)	3:1 replacement ratio
 - This mitigation standard could also be included in a future Corridor IGA or other agreement.
2. Acquisition or other preservation via the ESRF, local municipal action, or conservation organization action.

¹ Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Mitigation Guide

B. **Remaining Woodlands** are existing woodlands that are not counted as High Priority Woodlands.

- Remaining Woodlands cover 6,192 acres of the entire Corridor.
- 633 acres of Remaining Woodlands are located in protected landscapes
- 5,559 acres of Remaining Woodlands are unprotected.

Preservation strategies could include:

1. Municipalities use existing or modified Tree Preservation Ordinances, which may incorporate elements of the Woodland Preservation Ordinance described above. Because these ordinances can vary greatly in intent, detail, and effectiveness, CMAP and the consultant team could provide a model ordinance and/or examples of effective ordinance as part of the final plan.
2. Acquisition or other preservation via the ESRF, local municipal action, or conservation organization action.

C. **Waterbody and Stream Buffers in Undeveloped Areas** help protect surface and ground water quality from impacts related to human land use and management practices, provide food and habitat for unique plant and animal species, and connect important natural resource areas via greenways. Research recommends 100' buffer to reduce erosion, properly control sediment, and reduce nitrogen concentrations from entering waterways. Other sources recommend 300' buffers to provide optimal habitat connections for terrestrial riparian wildlife communities.

- The 300' buffer incorporates 3,008 acres of the entire Corridor, all of which are currently unprotected. Up to 50' buffers would be preserved under existing UDO requirements if development were to occur.

Preservation strategies could include:

1. Municipalities may elect to adopt buffer requirements that protect wider buffers than WDO requirements.
2. Preservation via the ESRF or other conservation organization action.
3. Preservation of buffer areas could be provided by deed or plat restrictions.

D. **Core Prairies and Grasslands** include remaining prairies and grasslands of any size in the Corridor, which are exceedingly rare landscapes.

- Prairies and grasslands cover 581 acres of the total Corridor.
- 365 acres of prairies and grasslands are located in protected landscapes.
- 216 acres of prairies and grasslands are currently unprotected.

Preservation strategies could include:

1. Establishment of mitigation requirements for disturbance or removal of these rare landscapes. Limited examples of mitigation for these types of resources was found, however, the Minnesota Department of Transportation requires a 1:1 replacement of any prairie or grassland area disturbed due to construction activities.
2. Work directly with jurisdictions in which these resources exist on preservation strategies. This may be a better approach for these resources than creating a blanket policy.
3. Acquisition or other preservation via the ESRF, local municipal action, or conservation organization action.

In a number of cases the resources described above overlap with each other and with regulated natural resources, such as floodplains or wetland buffers, which already provide preservation strategies. The table below summarizes the acreages of the four resources individually and for overlapping resources, which accounts for double-counting. If new standards were enacted to preserve the four landscapes detailed above, it would affect 6,442 acres of the Corridor that are not currently within the boundaries of protected lands or overlapping with already regulated natural resources.

TABLE 1: UNREGULATED LANDSCAPE ACREAGES	Protected	Unprotected	Total
High Priority Woodlands	3,499	2,602	6,101
<i>Within areas anticipated for Future Land Use Change</i>		655	
Remaining Woodlands	633	5,559	6,192
<i>Within areas anticipated for Future Land Use Change</i>		1,389	
300' Waterbody & Stream Buffers – Undeveloped Areas	N/A	3,008	3,008
<i>Within areas anticipated for Future Land Use Change</i>		1,166	
Core Prairies & Grasslands	365	216	581
<i>Within areas anticipated for Future Land Use Change</i>		31	
Total Combined Area for these resources (accommodates any overlap)	4,432	10,853	15,285
<i>Within areas anticipated for Future Land Use Change</i>		3,060	
Total unprotected and unregulated area (removes areas regulated for other resources such as wetland buffers or floodplains)		6,442	
<i>Within areas anticipated for Future Land Use Change</i>		1,859	